

RED CROSS WORK



THE nurses who were sent to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, at the call of the National Red Cross were: Washington, D. C., the Misses Read, Hewitt, Dillon, Feeley, Smith and Honendel; Philadelphia, the Misses Klink, Bowman, Rice, Seiwel, Bierstein and Detwiler; New York City, the Misses Pettit, Miller and Bell; Troy, the Misses Beadle and Cole; Rochester, Miss Phelan.

Miss Pettit's report to the New York headquarters practically covers the ground of the work done by the nurses of the different states.

REPORT OF WORK DONE BY THE NEW YORK BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS NURSES AT HATTIESBURG, MISS.

May 7th to 22d, 1908

WE arrived at Hattiesburg, May 7th, at 9.00 A.M., and were met at the station by Mr. R. L. Bennett, chairman of the Hattiesburg local relief fund committee who placed the entire party in comfortable quarters. He then notified Major W. L. Simpson in charge of the Relief Expedition and Captain B. K. Ashford, surgeon of the United States Army Medical Corps of our arrival. They both called soon after and explained the situation which was this: it was at that date, May 7th, lacking one day of two weeks since the cyclone, and conditions prevailing at that time were somewhat eased. The injured storm victims were brought to Hattiesburg from Purvis, the night of the storm, because the facilities were so much greater for treating the victims than at Purvis. The injured were placed in the only two hospitals in the town, which were private institutions, and in so far as local authorities had cared for the injured for nearly ten days before the arrival of the Relief Expedition, they were loath to make any changes in placing the injured; therefore, instead of a hospital relief station presided over by the different branches of the Red Cross nurses, the nurses had been placed wherever needed, and our branch would be placed likewise. Previous to the coming of the Red Cross nurses the local relief committee had sent to New Orleans for six Charity Hospital graduates and were paying them at the rate of \$25 per week for relief work in the two hospitals. Three of these nurses were discharged soon after the arrival of the first detachment of Red Cross nurses, and the remaining three after our arrival. Three of our nurses were assigned to night duty, two to day

duty, and I was to act with Major Simpson and Captain Ashford in coördinating the food, medical supplies, and repairs, also, clothes, equipment and the names of discharged patients who were entitled to transportation, etc. My duty was to go each morning to the hospitals, army tents and Red Cross relief stations; and collect and inspect all requisitions, when needful make suggestions and eliminate all requisitions not provided in the list of medical and commissary supplies provided by the Relief Expedition. These requisitions were then taken by me to the official offices to be approved and signed, then to the storehouse to be filled and delivered. All complaints from either superintendents, patients or head nurses regarding supplies, etc., were furnished me in written signed complaints, to be adjusted by the officials in whose department they were. As the buildings were from one-quarter to one-half mile apart and as I went mostly on foot, my first week was a pretty busy one, until I had learned to systematize my work, thereby saving much wasted time and many unnecessary footsteps; then as I had most of the afternoon unoccupied, and the work of providing food and raiment grew less at the Red Cross relief station presided over by Miss Read and Miss Dillon of the Washington branch, we thought it a good plan to try and form a sewing circle to make undergarments for the women and children out of some unbleached muslin sent in one of the Red Cross boxes, as we were sorely in need of some. The contributions of these things had been sent and were either unsuitable or, owing to the wornout condition, unusable; in that way we used our otherwise unoccupied time for one week before being discharged. May 22nd, the nurses holding hospitals were the first to be discharged, four besides myself. I requested my discharge as there was so little for me to do. I left two New York nurses to remain until the end of the work.

We left Hattiesburg in a fair way to close all relief stations by the end of the month, and believe that was the intention of those officials in charge of that end of the work.

Most of the injuries were head injuries, simple fractures and a few compound fractures. I believe there were about one hundred and seventy-five patients treated, more than half being negroes, who were lodged separately, however, not all in one place. That made it difficult to concentrate the work and necessitated scattering our forces, thereby requiring more help than would have been otherwise required to do the same amount of work.

Respectfully submitted, .

(Signed) GENOVEVA PETTIT,

A.N. Red Cross nurse.

May 29, 1908.

I neglected to state in my report that Miss A. G. Miller, one of our nurses, was taken ill with an acute attack of articular rheumatism the evening of May 9th, 1908, and as she was suffering and unfit for duty, I telegraphed Mr. Hurd for instructions May 11th. The following day I received word from Mrs. William Kinnicutt Draper furnishing transportation to Miss Miller, and also for another nurse should Miss Miller be unable to travel alone. Miss Miller had through me telegraphed one of her friends, a nurse located in Birmingham, Ala., to come down and accompany her to her destination; that obviated the necessity of one of our nurses returning with Miss Miller. Miss Miller was attended by Dr. Crawford, one of the local doctors, who advised her to leave the damp Mississippi climate as soon as possible. She left Hattiesburg, May 12th, 1908.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) GENOVEVA PETTIT.

May 29, 1908.



IN May, Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, addressing the workers of the Chicago Bureau of Charities, spoke of the spirit that must pervade organized social work, and in speaking of nursing said, as reported by "Coöperation": "Not very many years ago it was almost impossible to get the assistance of a trained nurse. It was easy to find women with sympathy and tenderness, but hard to find them with training; now it is easy to find them with training, but harder to find them with the sympathetic qualities. The remuneration and the professional life have drawn in many who lack by nature the characteristics of a good nurse."

Mrs. Spencer said social workers must avoid the same danger. A few years ago a social worker was not supposed to need any training; now there is a tendency to think that a school can make a social worker out of any one. The most that a social science school can do is to assist in avoiding the worst errors, and, above all things, cannot supply a personal fitness for the work.